

ENTERED

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

January 30, 2024

Nathan Ochsner, Clerk

for the

Southern District of Texas

United States of America)

v.)

Donald Lee Wilson)

Defendant)

Case No. 4:23-cr-00177

ORDER OF DETENTION PENDING TRIAL**Part I - Eligibility for Detention**

Upon the

- ☒ Motion of the Government attorney pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3142(f)(1), or
☐ Motion of the Government or Court's own motion pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3142(f)(2),

the Court held a detention hearing and found that detention is warranted. This order sets forth the Court's findings of fact and conclusions of law, as required by 18 U.S.C. § 3142(i), in addition to any other findings made at the hearing.

Part II - Findings of Fact and Law as to Presumptions under § 3142(e)

☐ **A. Rebuttable Presumption Arises Under 18 U.S.C. § 3142(e)(2) (*previous violator*):** There is a rebuttable presumption that no condition or combination of conditions will reasonably assure the safety of any other person and the community because the following conditions have been met:

☐ **(1)** the defendant is charged with one of the following crimes described in 18 U.S.C. § 3142(f)(1):

☐ **(a)** a crime of violence, a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1591, or an offense listed in 18 U.S.C.

§ 2332b(g)(5)(B) for which a maximum term of imprisonment of 10 years or more is prescribed; **or**

☐ **(b)** an offense for which the maximum sentence is life imprisonment or death; **or**

☐ **(c)** an offense for which a maximum term of imprisonment of 10 years or more is prescribed in the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. §§ 801-904), the Controlled Substances Import and Export Act (21 U.S.C. §§ 951-971), or Chapter 705 of Title 46, U.S.C. (46 U.S.C. §§ 70501-70508); **or**

☐ **(d)** any felony if such person has been convicted of two or more offenses described in subparagraphs (a) through (c) of this paragraph, or two or more State or local offenses that would have been offenses described in subparagraphs (a) through (c) of this paragraph if a circumstance giving rise to Federal jurisdiction had existed, or a combination of such offenses; **or**

☐ **(e)** any felony that is not otherwise a crime of violence but involves:

(i) a minor victim; **(ii)** the possession of a firearm or destructive device (as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921); **(iii)** any other dangerous weapon; or **(iv)** a failure to register under 18 U.S.C. § 2250; **and**

☐ **(2)** the defendant has previously been convicted of a Federal offense that is described in 18 U.S.C.

§ 3142(f)(1), or of a State or local offense that would have been such an offense if a circumstance giving rise to Federal jurisdiction had existed; **and**

☐ **(3)** the offense described in paragraph (2) above for which the defendant has been convicted was committed while the defendant was on release pending trial for a Federal, State, or local offense; **and**

- ☐ (4) a period of not more than five years has elapsed since the date of conviction, or the release of the defendant from imprisonment, for the offense described in paragraph (2) above, whichever is later.

☒ **B. Rebuttable Presumption Arises Under 18 U.S.C. § 3142(e)(3) (narcotics, firearm, other offenses):** There is a rebuttable presumption that no condition or combination of conditions will reasonably assure the appearance of the defendant as required and the safety of the community because there is probable cause to believe that the defendant committed one or more of the following offenses:

- ☐ (1) an offense for which a maximum term of imprisonment of 10 years or more is prescribed in the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. §§ 801-904), the Controlled Substances Import and Export Act (21 U.S.C. §§ 951-971), or Chapter 705 of Title 46, U.S.C. (46 U.S.C. §§ 70501-70508);
- ☐ (2) an offense under 18 U.S.C. §§ 924(c), 956(a), or 2332b;
- ☐ (3) an offense listed in 18 U.S.C. § 2332b(g)(5)(B) for which a maximum term of imprisonment of 10 years or more is prescribed;
- ☐ (4) an offense under Chapter 77 of Title 18, U.S.C. (18 U.S.C. §§ 1581-1597) for which a maximum term of imprisonment of 20 years or more is prescribed; **or**
- ☒ (5) an offense involving a minor victim under 18 U.S.C. §§ 1201, 1591, 2241, 2242, 2244(a)(1), 2245, 2251, 2251A, 2252(a)(1), 2252(a)(2), 2252(a)(3), 2252A(a)(1), 2252A(a)(2), 2252A(a)(3), 2252A(a)(4), 2260, 2421, 2422, 2423, or 2425.

☐ **C. Conclusions Regarding Applicability of Any Presumption Established Above**

- ☒ The defendant has not introduced sufficient evidence to rebut the presumption above, at least with respect to his risk of danger to the community, and detention is ordered on that basis.

OR

- ☐ The defendant has presented evidence sufficient to rebut the presumption, but after considering the presumption and the other factors discussed below, detention is warranted.

Part III - Analysis and Statement of the Reasons for Detention

After considering the factors set forth in 18 U.S.C. § 3142(g) and the information presented at the detention hearing, the Court concludes that the defendant must be detained pending trial because the Government has proven:

- ☒ By clear and convincing evidence that no condition or combination of conditions of release will reasonably assure the safety of any other person and the community.
- ☐ By a preponderance of evidence that no condition or combination of conditions of release will reasonably assure the defendant's appearance as required.

In addition to any findings made on the record at the hearing, the reasons for detention include the following:

- ☒ Weight of evidence against the defendant is strong
- ☒ Subject to lengthy period of incarceration if convicted
- ☐ Prior criminal history
- ☐ Participation in criminal activity while on probation, parole, or supervision
- ☐ History of violence or use of weapons
- ☐ History of alcohol or substance abuse
- ☐ Lack of stable employment
- ☐ Lack of stable residence

-
-
- ☐ Lack of financially responsible sureties
 - ☒ Lack of significant community or family ties to this district
 - ☐ Significant family or other ties outside the United States
 - ☐ Lack of legal status in the United States
 - ☐ Subject to removal or deportation after serving any period of incarceration
 - ☐ Prior failure to appear in court as ordered
 - ☐ Prior attempt(s) to evade law enforcement
 - ☐ Use of alias(es) or false documents
 - ☐ Background information unknown or unverified
 - ☐ Prior violations of probation, parole, or supervised release

OTHER REASONS OR FURTHER EXPLANATION:

Even assuming that Defendant Donald Lee Wilson had presented sufficient evidence that his release would pose an unreasonable risk of danger to the community, clear and convincing evidence nonetheless indicates that he should be detained pending trial. The Government present compelling evidence, cultivated through a years-long investigation spanning several continents, that Defendant held a key position as an administrator who ran multiple networks that facilitated the dissemination of child pornography. Defendant also admitted that he helped establish some of these platforms. And as an administrator, Defendant policed network “rules,” including those designed to ensure that exchanges on the network would avoid detection by law enforcement. At any time, thousands of individuals were using various network channels to communicate and share links to websites that contained hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of images of child pornography. And Defendant himself was constantly on the network, including just minutes before law enforcement executed a warrant to search his home on December 13, 2023.

Defendant’s managerial role in perpetuating the exploitation of children evinces the serious risk of danger he would pose if released. This harm is magnified manyfold because of Defendant’s technical savvy. If released, Defendant could—in short order, simply by using someone else’s device—warn the networks’ users about the investigation. That, in turn, would not only jeopardize the Government’s ongoing investigation, but it could drive the illegal conduct to other unknown network locations, thereby perpetuating the danger to child victims. Indeed, users anonymize their activities on the network, including by using arbitrary screennames (like Defendant did himself) and VPNs. The ease through which Defendant could endanger more children by prompting child pornography users to migrate away from the Government’s eyes makes it impossible for his conditions to be adequately policed by any conditions that the Court could impose.

Defendant emphasized his lack of documented criminal history, his prior military service, and a character letter from his wife from whom he separated in 2007. But Defendant evidently has maintained a secret life of exploiting children. In fact, Defendant refused to acknowledge the harm caused by his conduct, maintaining there is nothing wrong with having “consensual” sexual activity with children. Having maintained a double-life for this long, the Court is not convinced that any restrictions like barring his use of internet-capable devices would provide adequate assurances that he would not pose a threat if released. And the fact that Defendant has a job in the computer field merely underscores his ready access to, and expertise in using, devices that he could easily use to perpetuate harm. Accordingly, it is **ORDERED** that Defendant Donald Lee Wilson be **DETAINED** pending trial.

Part IV - Directions Regarding Detention

The defendant is remanded to the custody of the Attorney General or to the Attorney General’s designated representative for confinement in a corrections facility separate, to the extent practicable, from persons awaiting or serving sentences or being held in custody pending appeal. The defendant must be afforded a reasonable opportunity for private consultation with defense counsel. On order of a court of the United States or on request of an attorney for the Government, the person

in charge of the corrections facility must deliver the defendant to a United States Marshal for the purpose of an appearance in connection with a court proceeding.

Date: January 30, 2024


United States Magistrate Judge